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One of the rarest German Tapestries of the second half of the fifteenth century, a Franconian panel believed to have long decorated the Cathedral of St. Lorenz in Nuremberg, is one of four fine tapestries recently acquired by The Cleveland Museum of Art. They were part of the Coralie Walker Hanna Memorial Collection, which came to the Museum through the expressed wishes of Mrs. Hanna.

Woven in 1490, the panel "The Virgin and Child Surrounded by Saints", like all others from the looms of convents, is long and narrow. It shows a technical perfection rarely encountered even among the unsurpassed Nuremberg weavings, whose narrow shape and small dimensions designated them for altar frontals, or for a position above choir stalls. Whether the cartoon for this tapestry was inspired by some beautiful contemporary woodcut or engraving, or whether it was a product of a local convent design, cannot be definitely ascertained. It can be stated, however, that no other Franconian example that has survived can excel this tapestry in the delineation of the subject matter.

Unlike France and Flanders in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Germany did not have rulers who were great protectors of the fine arts. She had had no looms comparable to those of Paris and Arras, but the small hangings which were woven there in chateau and convents appeal through their naivety, simplicity, and great decorative qualities, full of charm and poetry.

In addition to its merit as a superlative example of the period, it is in an excellent state of preservation, being almost intact save for a few inches of the lower portion, and an inch or two at either side.

Another tapestry of great importance is that of the "Shepherds in a Round Dance", one of a set of five pastorals depicting the peasants in various pursuits, which comes from the Flemish town of Tournai, a leading center for tapestry weaving. This dates from the early sixteenth century, as does the two from Brussels, whose looms furnished some of the most splendid and sumptuous panels of the period. "The Queen of Sheba", in which the young queen holds a box of rich gifts and kneels before King Solomon, is of the late Gothic period. The Building of the Temple, dating from the middle of the sixteenth century,

is a fully developed Renaissance panel, to which great beauty is added by the wide decorative border of grotesques. In this panel, Solomon, dressed in armor, with crown and scepter, is seen in the foreground consulting with two men. Scattered throughout the tapestry are numerous groups concerned with building activities, the architect holding in his hand a blue print such as is used by today's architect and draftsman.

These tapestries will remain on view, together with the remainder of the Hanna Memorial collection, throughout the summer months.